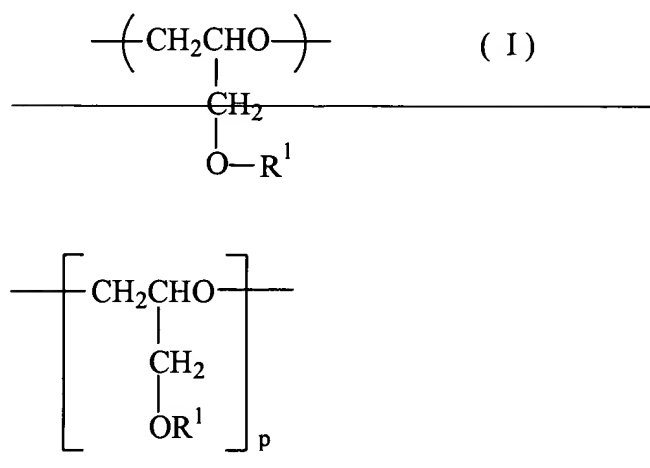


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A surface modifier for an inorganic solid, which comprises a polyether having a monomeric unit represented by formula (I):



wherein R¹ represents a hydrogen atom; an optionally substituted C₁₋₅₀ hydrocarbon, C₁₋₅₀ fluoroalkyl, C₆₋₅₀ fluoroaryl or Si₁₋₅₀ siloxysilylpropyl group; or a group represented by $\text{---}(\text{AO})_m\text{---R}^2$ [[:]] ;

in which R² represents an optionally substituted C₁₋₄₂ hydrocarbon, C₁₋₄₂ fluoroalkyl, C₆₋₄₂ fluoroaryl or Si₁₋₄₀ siloxysilylpropyl group; A represents a C₂₋₃ alkylene group; m is a number selected from 1 to 100; and m×A's may be the same or different; and p is 67-100,000.

2. (Original) An inorganic solid having at least a part of its surface coated with the surface modifier defined in Claim 1.

3. (Original) A composition of a synthetic resin, which comprises the surface modifier as defined in Claim 1 and an inorganic solid.

4. (Original) A composition of a rubber, which comprises the surface modifier as defined in Claim 1 and an inorganic solid.

5. (Original) A composition of a wax, which comprises the surface modifier as defined in Claim 1 and an inorganic solid.

6. (Original) A composition of a liquid, which comprises the surface modifier as defined in Claim 1 and an inorganic solid.

7. (Original) A composition of a flame-retardant resin, which comprises the surface modifier as defined in Claim 1 and an inorganic solid.

8. (Original) A method which comprises treating a surface of an inorganic solid with the polyether as defined in Claim 1 and dispersing it in a medium.

9. (Original) A method which comprises treating a surface of an inorganic solid with the polyether as defined in Claim 1 to modify the surface.

10. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 8, wherein the medium is a synthetic resin, a rubber, a wax, a flame-retardant resin composition or a liquid.

11. - 13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) A method of dispersing an inorganic solid ~~as defined in Claim 1~~ in a medium, which comprises:

modifying the surface of an inorganic solid with the polyether as defined in Claim 1, and dispersing the modified inorganic solid in a medium.

15. (Previously Presented) The method claimed in Claim 14 in which the medium is a synthetic resin, a rubber, a wax, a flame-retardant resin composition or a liquid.

16. (Previously Presented) A method of modifying a surface of an inorganic solid, which comprises:

treating the surface of an inorganic solid with the polyether as defined in Claim 1 to modify the surface.

17. (Canceled)